UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

# FSIS NOTICE	23-13	3/22/13

RAW PRODUCT DESTINED FOR READY-TO-EAT PRODUCT EXCLUDED FROM *SALMONELLA* TESTING

I. PURPOSE

This notice reissues FSIS Notice 06-12 and updates instructions to provide examples of adequate controls that establishments have used to ensure that all of their product is further processed into ready-to-eat (RTE) product at an official establishment. This notice advises inspection program personnel (IPP) that even though most raw meat and poultry products are subject to *Salmonella* testing, there is a narrow set of circumstances in which sampling is not warranted. When an establishment processes all its products into RTE product or moves all its raw products for further processing into RTE product at another federally inspected establishment, the raw products at that establishment are excluded from the not-ready-to-eat (NRTE) *Salmonella* verification testing program schedule.

II. BACKGROUND

FSIS published a Federal Register Notice, 73 FR 4767 (January 28, 2008), "*Salmonella* Verification Sampling Program, Response to Comments and New Agency Policies," that stated, "The Food Safety and Inspection Service will exclude from the *Salmonella* verification testing program schedule any slaughter establishment that processes all carcasses slaughtered into RTE product or diverts all of its raw products to another official federally-inspected establishment for further processing into a RTE product."

III. CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH SAMPLING IS NOT WARRANTED

An establishment meets the criteria outlined in the Federal Register notice when the establishment either processes all product in a product class (e.g., broilers) into RTE product or moves all product in a product class to another official federally-inspected establishment for further processing into a RTE product. For example, an establishment slaughters broilers and produces not ready-to-eat (NRTE) ground chicken as one of its products. The establishment ships all of its NRTE ground chicken product to another establishment that uses it to make an RTE product. In this example, IPP would not sample the NRTE ground chicken; however, if any raw products are produced from the carcasses, the broiler carcasses would still be eligible for *Salmonella* sampling.

IV. IPP VERIFICATION RESPONSIBILITIES

A. If the establishment:

1. Processes all product or all product from a particular product class into RTE product; or

2. Moves all product or all product from a particular product class to another official federally inspected establishment for further processing into RTE product;

IPP are to verify during the performance of the associated HACCP procedure that the intended use of all the product the establishment produces is for processing into RTE product (9 CFR 417.2(a)(2)). If an establishment meets the criteria in IV. A. 1. above, all raw products in that product class would remain in the establishment to be further processed.

IPP are to verify by:

1. Observing that all the product moves to be further processed into RTE product in the establishment; or

2. Reviewing records to ensure that all products are further processed into RTE products in the establishment. Records may include those containing production codes or production lot codes.

B. In establishments that claim to meet the criteria in IV. A. 2. above, IPP are to review the establishment's HACCP plan and hazard analysis for the intended use of the products and are to verify that the establishment has procedures incorporated in its food safety system that effect the movement of all product from that product class to another federally-inspected establishment at which the product is further processed into RTE product.

Some acceptable ways that IPP could verify that the establishment has necessary procedures incorporated into its food safety system include:

1. The establishment maintains records showing that the official establishment receiving the raw product processes all of the product into RTE product, such as a copy of HACCP records showing the product meets a lethality CCP matched with bills of lading with corresponding production codes.

2. The establishment receives letters of guarantee showing that all product from a particular product class is further processed into RTE product and maintains on-going communication with the receiving establishment to verify that all its product is being processed as RTE.

3. The establishment has a contractual agreement with the receiving establishment so the producing establishment has knowledge of the receiving establishment's production process.

Some insufficient procedures would include:

1. The establishment only labels the raw product with a statement "for further processing".

2. The establishment only maintains a letter from the receiving establishment that says it only produces RTE, without the receiving establishment gathering additional information to verify that all product is processed into RTE product in an official establishment.

C. If an establishment does not have procedures incorporated into its food safety system that effect the movement of all product to another federally-inspected establishment at which the product is further processed into RTE product, then the establishment is still subject to the traditional sampling under the *Salmonella* verification testing program. IPP are to be aware that it is the responsibility of the establishment to maintain sufficient documentation to support the establishment's assertion that the product in question is further processed into RTE product.

NOTE: NRTE products destined to other than domestic, federally inspected establishments for processing into RTE products do NOT meet the criteria in IV.A.2. Examples of such establishments include foreign, state inspected, or food service establishments, including HRI.

D. If an establishment produces more than 1 lot of NRTE ground chicken and ships the product to different establishments, and one of the establishments produces non-RTE products, IPP are to sample product under the *Salmonella* verification testing program. Some of the product produced from the product class (e.g., NRTE ground chicken) goes to at least 1 establishment that uses it for non-RTE product. In this situation, IPP are not to differentiate between the product going to establishments producing the RTE product versus the product going to establishments producing the non-RTE product when taking a sample.

V. ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR IPP

A. Should an establishment NOT meet the criteria in IV. A. above and produce both RTE and NRTE end-products of a single product class, IPP are to make two entries for the product class in the establishment profile; and

1. Check the 'RTE' intended use box in the establishment profile on one of the entries; and

2. NOT check the 'RTE' intended use box in the establishment profile on the other entry.

NOTE: This establishment WILL be scheduled for verification sampling through PHIS if it meets the product volume and other scheduling eligibility requirements.

B. Should an establishment meet the criteria in IV. A. above and produce ONLY RTE end-products of a single product class, IPP are to:

1. Make a single entry for the product class in the establishment profile; and

2. Check the 'RTE' intended use box in the establishment profile for that product;

NOTE: This establishment will NOT be scheduled for verification sampling through PHIS.

C. If IPP, while collecting samples for the *Salmonella* verification testing program in an establishment, determine that the establishment meets the criteria in IV. A. above, they are to complete the set before proceeding with the instructions in this notice.

D. If IPP determine that an establishment no longer processes all raw product from a particular class into RTE product, or no longer moves all raw product from a particular class to another official federally-inspected establishment for further processing into a RTE product, then IPP are to update the entries in the establishment profile.

VI. QUESTIONS

Refer questions regarding this notice through askFSIS or by telephone at 1-800-233-3935. When submitting a question, use the Submit a Question tab, and enter the following information in the fields provided:

Subject Field: Enter **FSIS Notice 23-13**
Question Field: Enter question with as much detail as possible.
Product Field: Select **General Inspection Policy** from the drop-down menu.
Category Field: Select **Sampling/Salmonella** from the drop-down menu.
from the drop-down menu.
Policy Arena: Select **Domestic (U.S.) Only** from the drop-down menu.

When all fields are complete, press the **Submit** button.

Assistant Administrator
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